

Auto-photography and account of oneself: digital materialities and algorithmic audience in the selfie practice¹

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Abstract

We seek to investigate, through the perspective of experiences, how material-discursive relations are developed through the practice of the selfie. For this analysis, we take as starting point images published on Facebook and taken in a square located in the city of Salvador, along with the automatic alternative text metadata – understood here as an algorithmic audience. We argue that the practice of selfie is an experience of account of oneself related to a multiple another – targeting an audience of entangled subjects and algorithms. In this way, we suggest to understand the selfie as an apparatus of material-discursive practices of account of oneself that is formed in the interaction between different digital materiality and relational experiences.

Keywords: Selfie. Account of oneself. Digital materialities. Algorithmic audience.

Introduction: the selfie practice

Since 2013, when the Oxford dictionaries have elected “selfie” as the word of the year², reflecting the emergence and the rapid spread of a photographic phenomenon associated with the smartphone, the production of this type of image has grown substantially and it has become something incorporated into everyday life by being disseminated in several digital social networks. Apart from being a type of image, the selfie puts itself as a practice.

The practice of selfie begins to be the subject of different academic works because of its popularity regardless of regional restrictions. When studying it in terms of cultural and historical perspectives, Gunthert (2015) identifies three different ways to practice the selfie: with the help of a mirror, turning the mobile device, or through the front camera. For him, this type of image has conversational characteristics that show its inherent sociability when being produced as a photograph to be shared.

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2 Available at: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/11/word-of-the-year-2013-winner>. Accessed on: Apr. 13th, 2019.

However, the current researches³ about the phenomenon work with diverse objectives and perspective. We have identified some of them: the relationship between public and private (LASÉN, 2013, 2015, SANTOS, 2016, WALSH; BAKER, 2016); the observation of psychological or behavioral factors (CARBON, 2017, LINDELL, 2017, MEESE *et al.*, 2015, SHAH; TEWARI, 2016, SUNG *et al.*, 2016, WILLIAMS; MARQUEZ, 2015); the transformations of intimacy or relationship between selfie, gender, and sexuality (ČUŠ BABIČ; ROPERT; MUSIL, 2018, LASÉN, 2013, LASÉN; GARCÍA, 2015, MIGUEL, 2016, NAEZER, 2018); and those that understand selfie as a set of practice or sociotechnical networks (CRUZ; THORNHAM, 2015, FROSH, 2015, HESS, 2015, SENFT; BAYM, 2015), or that take into account digital materialities and/or platform studies and digital methods (MONTARDO, 2019, WARFIELD, 2016, 2018). In other studies, it is assumed that there is a direct link between selfies and individualistic and narcissistic social formats, seeking to understand the reasons for this involvement (HALPERN; VALENZUELA; KATZ, 2016, OLIVEIRA, 2015, PERSICHETTI, 2013; SUNG *et al.*, 2016).

We go against a prior look reduced by the point of view of narcissism by giving preference to the interlocution with works that reject a framework *a priori* and develop questions focused on the associative dynamics or practices and experiences related to the phenomenon. Hess (2015, p. 1630), when treating it as a social practice, understands it in hybrid terms: “While the easy explanation is that selfies exist as emblems of a narcissistic contemporary culture, a deeper reading of selfies provides instead an insight into the relationship between technology, the self, materiality, and networks”. Similarly, Gómez Cruz and Thornham (2015) perceive the selfie not only as an image but as a complex process of practices, showing its relationship with mediated conversations, stabilizations and convergences through the smartphone, besides understanding them as durable algorithms with a connection among software, digital design, social networks, and mobile technologies. The practice of selfie can also be characterized as one capable of pointing out transmissions of feelings through different relationships – between the photographer and the subject, between image and filter software, between the observer and the observed, between individuals circulating images, between users and users, between users and social software architectures (SENFT; BAYM, 2015).

We are also interested in studies focused on the intersection between the practice of selfie and forms of intimacy production (LASÉN, 2013, 2015, MIGUEL, 2016). Or still, those who extrapolate the analysis of the image itself and understand the selfie and the sharing of digital images amid a sociotechnical network and as a social practice – as Frosh (2015) does when dealing with a “gestural image” or Gómez Cruz and Meyer (2012) when indicating mobility, ubiquity, and connection associated with photographs taken through smartphones.

Along with Gómez Cruz (2016), we follow a proposal to think about the selfie as a complex set of practices and materialities. However, in this work, we aim to start an investigation that enables an advance to identify some specificities of this practice. For this,

3 For studies on selfie with different perspectives carried out by Brazilian researchers, see the book organized by Sandra Montardo (2018).

we take Warfield's (2016) work as a starting point, which, based on Barad's (2007) agential realism, deals with selfies as networked material-discursive entanglement. Beyond this perspective, we understand the selfie not only as a practice of producing images but as a form of constant giving an account of oneself addressed to the other (BUTLER, 2015). They are accounts – it should be noted – not only developed as imaginary discourses focused at themselves but also capable of being linked to material and discursive conformation imbricated in visions, procedures, and algorithmic audiences.

Throughout an attentive perspective to the experiences, perceiving the selfie, therefore, as a practice based on relational experiences (PASTOR, 2017) – and not just as a type of image –, in this article we aim to investigate the material-discursive relationships in the production of accounts developed through this type of digital auto-photography. We argue that the practice of selfie is configured as an experience of producing accounts of oneself obligatorily linked to another multiple – targeting an audience of tangles of subjects and algorithms. We suggest tensioning the selfie to understand it as an *apparatus* – in the sense proposed by Barad (2007), of specific material-discursive practices – of giving accounts of oneself that are formed through digital materialities with algorithmic procedures and hearings.

The selfie in the square and the algorithmic view

As a starting point to investigate the practice of selfie and the experiences and materialities involved in the production of self-narratives, we use photos taken in a square⁴ in the city of Salvador and published on Facebook. We have selected all publications of selfies that were tagged with the specific geolocation within two months⁵. There were found 29 images.

We activated the extension Show Facebook Computer Vision Tags⁶ for this descriptive analysis⁷. The extension was developed for the Google Chrome browser and it can make the tags generated by the Automatic Alternative Text⁸ of the social network visible. It is an accessibility tool that allows the presentation as an audio document of the contents of the images for those with visual difficulties through automatic readings carried out by artificial intelligence. It generates keywords showing the result of the automatic reading that shows the possible content of a photograph. The identification is therefore transformed into metadata and it follows the hidden information of the image.

4 For this analysis, we chose Praça Ana Lúcia Magalhães, located in Salvador/BA. The aim is to perceive the photographic experiences that go beyond the geographic space itself – besides transforming it into metadata from a geotag – and connect with the dynamics of the digital social network. The square, therefore, becomes a place that combines, in everyday uses, several leisure practices – including the practice of selfie. This work is part of a broader research project in which this square is used as a starting point for an ethnographic investigation of the practice of selfie.

5 Dec. 18th, 2016 to Feb. 19th, 2017.

6 To support the analysis developed in this article, we use the Atlas.ti qualitative research and analysis software.

7 More details about the extension. Available at: <https://github.com/ageitgey/show-facebook-computer-vision-tags>. Accessed on: Apr. 8th, 2019.

8 For more information on the development of Automatic Alternative Text. Available at: <https://code.facebook.com/posts/45760510772545>. Accessed on: Apr. 8th, 2019.

All photographs were classified into three types: group selfie, selfie in pairs, and individual selfie. The first one combines selfie practices that result in an image with over two people in the foreground, the second relates to photos with two people and, finally, the selfies with just one person. In the same order, we have 11 records associated with group selfies, ten in pairs, and eight individual selfies. Although this type of practice is commonly associated with isolation and individual self-representation, it is noticed, at least in this example of sociability in a public space, the predominance of those images capable of aggregating over one person – 21 out of 29 photos.

Similarly, Computer Vision Tags (CVT) shows a more common recognition of categories aimed at human identification. In the image, 6 out of 23 different tags shown are exclusive for counting and actions referring to people. Through them, 56 different appearances are recorded. Among the five tags⁹ that appear more often, three are directly related to descriptions of people: people (20), people smiling (18), outdoor (17), 1 person (12), and closeup (6).

Figures 1 and 2 – Group selfies



Source: Images extracted from Facebook.

In one publication¹⁰, for example, we see a person in the foreground holding a dog in one hand, while with the other hand, keeping his arm outstretched, he is probably holding a smartphone. Like him, there are five more people behind: two adults and three

9 All CVT found: 1 person, beard, child, closeup, cloud, concert, crowd, eyeglasses, hat, indoor, nature, one or more people, outdoor, n people, people sitting, people smiling, people standing, selfie, sky, standing, sunglasses, table, tree.

10 All images inserted in this text were shared publicly on Facebook. However, we blur all visible faces, in order to preserve people's identity.

children smiling at the photo. “Sunday in the square!!”, they wrote in the caption. Here, The Automatic Alternative Text has identified two descriptions of the image: “6 people” and “people smiling”. The former, counting the number of people in the image while the latter indicates the facial action of those people.

The practice of selfie goes beyond what is visible to the human eye. That way, it is important to understand the selfie as a practice to avoid a look centered only on the image. This shows how one should complementarily add the continuous material-discursive multiplications capable of extrapolating the moment of capture and publication of the image to it.

Another post taken from Facebook shows a woman in the foreground wearing sunglasses and framed on the right side of the photo, which allows six other people to appear in the background. If we observe the angle of the image, we notice that the intention is to make a type of selfie from top to bottom, with a face in the foreground and the rest of the people sitting in the background. They are all smiling and looking at the camera – people smiling and people sitting, as the automatic reading of the image also confirms –, and one of them is sitting on a beach chair and making a positive sign with the thumb. On the floor, we see something that looks like a picnic tablecloth, red and white checkered, with trays with snacks, and in the center a chocolate cake with strawberry. The photo, as it is possible to observe, was taken to record some celebration.

Figures 3 and 4 – Group selfie and selfie in pairs



Source: Images extracted from Facebook.

In another publication of a selfie taken with three people, the automatic reading of the image reveals the following CVT: 3 people, people smiling, child, outdoor, close up. It

is a family photo with a man holding his smartphone up and hugging a woman – the two of them smiling at the camera, as shown by Facebook’s image reading algorithm. There is also a child, the couple’s likely daughter, clinging to his mother. She’s not smiling, she seems shouting happily at the photo. The parents have their faces against each other, as the daughter holds on to her mother. In the caption, they write: “Happiness, happiness...”. Hence, such expressions of contentment are shown in the smiles and the scream recorded in the image, in the automatic reading “people smiling”, in the form of text in the description, and also in the comments of friends: “What a joy!!!”, with an emoji representing a happy smile; “What beautiful smiles!!!”; “Beautiful and happy family!!! I love it soooo much!!!” next to smiling face figures and a heart. Therefore, the smiles go through the selfie practice at that moment in the square: to hold the smartphone, interact with family members, hug, recording, and view the images. They become metadata – probably allocated in an extensive database of other tags of people smiling. They reach the caption chosen for the image, mix with emojis representing joy, and are multiplied by the textual expressions of friends who comment on the publication.

The demonstration of affection, joy, and smiles is present in most photos with two people. They even show greater proximity, closer faces, in selfies in closeup – as called by Facebook’s reading algorithm. In one of these publications, we see a couple, a man and a woman, smiling at the camera with their faces almost touching. “There are moments in life that seem like nothing happens, then God surprises us with a gift”, he writes in the post, indicating that they are probably romantically involved. She replies in the comments: “You are my gift!”. Then friends and relatives congratulate the couple.

Figures 5 and 6 – Selfie in pairs and individual selfie



Source: Images extracted from Facebook.

The smiles, so as other facial expressions, appear in more photos of pairs that indicate some kind of romantic involvement. Sitting on a bench in the square along with his likely girlfriend, a boy stretches out an arm and produces a smiling selfie, while she smiles and sticks out her tongue at the same time. They touch the top of their heads, keeping their faces tilted; she hugs him from behind with one hand, while the other holds a large açai bowl. He writes in the caption: “So it’s Christmas! Let’s get fat!” with the hashtag “#LetsHaveAçai?”. It is a sharing made on the night of December 25, with the Christmas decoration of the square visible in the background. In the comments, friends talk about the couple’s relationship as much as the reference to Christmas: “Merry Christmas, successful couple from Bahia!”. The CVT does not directly perceive the Christmas lights, but it correctly identifies the number of people, smiles, trees, and an outdoor situation – 2 people, people smiling, tree, outdoor.

Despite appearing in smaller numbers, selfies with only one person show different characteristics. One of the most curious publications has two different photos edited in just one image. A middle-aged man with thin partially white hair in a polo shirt and headphones photographs himself twice under the sun. In the background, there’s a city hall totem displaying a temperature of 34 degrees. In the two images, taken very close to his face, it is possible to notice the shades of his glasses projected by the strong sunlight. However, in the photo on the left, he is smiling quietly; in the one on the right, he is widening his eyes, throwing his head back a little and opening his mouth, making an expression of astonishment. “Heat is good ... but 34 at 8:30 am is chipping!!!! I miss Sampa’s cold”, he writes. Also, he tags on Facebook “feeling hot at Praça Ana Lúcia Magalhães”. Some people refute the statement in the comments, they say that “Thing’s around here is also hot”, or, still, make ironic references – probably – to his facial expressions in the photos: “you’re looking beautiful huh !!!!!”. The amount of sunlight seems to confuse the automatic tags of Facebook: in an image, points to sunglasses; in another, just eyeglasses.

The observation of some of these practices shows how the experience develops not only in a facial image registered in the form of a self-portrait but also in the possibilities of publication and interaction in digital social networks; in the sociability generated through this practice in playful moments with one or more people; in the intimate relationships developed; in self-narratives through imagery production with faces multiplied through networks; besides the dissemination, sometimes involuntary, of metadata and behaviors capable of being explored through readings of shared images. This experience is constructed as a tangle of diverse practices and it aggregates different material and discursive dynamics and interactions.

The account of oneself, digital materialities and algorithmic audience

The images called selfie shared on social networks are not restricted to the personal account imagery, but are configured – together with geolocation data, hashtags and textual descriptions – as a practice directed to the interaction with others. From this perspective, the

publications also work as a narrative of themselves, an account of a moment in the square, as it is possible to observe from the analyzed publications. To understand this relationship, we suggest perceiving the selfie as a practice of giving an account of oneself through a relation with the other, as proposed by Butler (2005).

According to Butler (2015, p. 53), “if I tell the story to a ‘you’, that other is implied not only as an internal feature of the narrative but also as an irreducibly exterior condition and trajectory of the mode of address”. However, the account of oneself, far beyond a purely narrative question, is put by Butler (2015, p. 13) in moral terms – a moral philosophy wrapped in “a question that has to do with conduct and, hence, with doing”. For her, there is a paradoxical connection between “moral deliberation” and the “task of giving an account of oneself” (BUTLER, 2015, p. 21). At the same time that there would be a set of moral rules producing a subject, there is a reflexive negotiation of that subject concerning them.

Based on Michel Foucault’s works, Butler (2015) connects the forms of giving an account of oneself with ethical action. There is no totally determined ethical action, at the same time that it cannot be radically free; therefore, “Its struggle or primary dilemma is to be produced by a world, even as one must produce oneself in some way” ((BUTLER, 2015, p. 31). Ethics, in this way, relates to self-knowledge. There are possibilities of giving an account of oneself in a dialogue – and disputes, at certain times – with ethical formulations. The moral subject in Foucault (1984), for example, makes up precisely through “modes of subjectification”, “asceticism” and “practices of the self”. In this way, the moral action would not be restricted to acts shaped by rules, laws or values; it “also implies a certain relationship with oneself; this relationship is not simply ‘self-awareness’ but the constitution of the self as a ‘moral subject’”, a subject who “acts on himself seeking to know himself, controls himself, puts himself to the test, improves himself, its transforms” (FOUCAULT, 1984, p. 37).

When Butler (2015, p. 32) follows this relationship between ethics¹¹ and self-practice developed by Foucault, she argues that “a theory of subject formation that acknowledges the limits of self-knowledge can serve the conception of ethics and, indeed, responsibility”. Our relationship with the other, she explains, also develops in the opacity’s sense of the subject – and that opacity is even linked to ethical formations. When we relate to others, moments of ignorance about ourselves also arise. The subject’s opacity, therefore, is a consequence of his condition as a relational being.

Viewed in this way, giving an account of oneself involves a relationship with the other. “If it is an account of myself, and it is an accounting to someone, then I am compelled to give the account away, to send it off, to be dispossessed of it at the very moment that I establish it as my account,”, writes Butler (2015, p. 51). This account, however, fits into a format of interpellation, even if we do not know to who exactly it is addressed. The account

11 In terms of the relationship between ethics and the account of oneself, Butler develops the argument that a certain opacity of the subject, or an inability to report completely to another, would not represent an “ethical failure”; on the contrary, it is something indispensable for ethics: “And is the relationality that conditions and blinds this ‘self’ not, precisely, an indispensable resource for ethics?” (BUTLER, 2005, p. 40).

only completes, therefore, “on the occasion when it is effectively exported and expropriated from the domain of what is my own”. (BUTLER, 2015, p. 51-52).

When we photograph ourselves, we do not remain anonymous; we produce accounts of ourselves addressing another – even if this other is not directly known, as Butler recalls. The account of oneself – and, in our case, the practice of selfie understood as an account of oneself – configures as a relational production. On the other hand, this account that necessarily leaves the domain of the self and must reach another, a “you”, is developed by Butler (2015) towards a relationship between subjects. Along with this relationship, we are interested in working with the practice of selfie capable of producing accounts of oneself that goes beyond the domain of the self and also encompasses a relational form that escapes associations and interpretations carried out only between subjects. In other words, we are interested in exploring an experience involving associations and productions of subjectivity between humans and non-humans. To use the example analyzed in this work: the account of the self, carried out through selfie practices, addresses an “other” formed by automatic image recognition algorithms.

The account of oneself remains relational; we add, however, a plurality to the sense of “being”, “self” and “other” – approaching authors like James (1912, 2000), Latour (2012), Viveiros de Castro (2015) and Stengers (2008). Therefore, when we avoid separation between interiority and exteriority, material and immaterial, human and non-human, subject and object, we can rework the question raised by Butler (2015). When we become “self-narrating beings” (BUTLER, 2015, p. 23), in terms of the production of images of oneself, and we involve ourselves in the practice of selfie, we realize that this “other” is configured both by that friend that will see and comment on the photo and that audience of the algorithm that reads the image automatically, transforms it into metadata that connects it with other images, other selfies, other photos in squares, other faces multiplied in different networks. Or, for that seductive and discreet request from some digital social network: share accounts of yourself, publish your selfie, show me your face, show your humor, say what you are doing now, or even bring your experience here, turn it into data.

Let’s return to one of the selfie posts in the square analyzed in this work, in which a family – a couple and a child – appears smiling and hugging, and add a caption with the words “Happiness, Happiness...”. The looks on the camera become looks directed also to those, friends and acquaintances, who will see that image on Facebook and will probably react with likes or even comments like “Beautiful and Happy Family!!! Love it soooo much!” – with many emojis next to it. Their smiling faces, however, are directed not only to this human audience excited by such familiar affections in the square but also to the algorithmic audience that, for example, identifies in the image the presence of 3 people, including a child, in close up, smiling and photographing themselves in an outdoor space. The affections, the interactions, the intimate relationships of that family materialize in comments, in auto-generate tags, emojis, likes, shares. It transforms the account of oneself and shared intimacy into metadata that feeds the social network. This reveals the need for understanding the

intersection between materiality and discursive practices that goes beyond the limit of human agency and allows a post-humanist perception of this relationship (BARAD, 2007).

We can affirm that the construction of an account of oneself through the practice of selfie relates and forms jointly with multiple audiences, which is conducted by material, and discursive practices and entanglements, as it has been said in this article, our shared intimacy and the accounts and sociability produced, perceived and developed through the practice of selfie are placed in relational terms that start from the other. This other, however, must combine the human audience, or those with whom we take photos, and the material forms inherent in the productions of subjectivity

Butler's analysis (2005) must be reinterpreted to understand this type of self-narrative developed with the practice of selfie to avoid the anthropocentric elements linked to it. That is to say, rethink the materiality of the practice of selfie and the production of accounts of oneself. According to Barad (2007), it can be said that despite Butler (2015) in a performativity logic combines matter and meaning, she limits her investigation to the production of human bodies. Thus, for both Butler (2015) and Foucault (1984) – Barad (2007) explains – the agency is linked only to the human domain. As stated by the author, “Butler's theory ultimately reinscribes matter as a passive product of discursive practices rather than as an active agent that takes part in the very process of materialization” (BARAD, 2007, p. 151). Through the elaboration of a perspective called agential realism, Barad (2007, p. 146) claims a “post humanist performative account of the material-discursive practices of mattering”. This is not a realism linked to the essence or property of things; it is about the perception of dynamic materiality guided by difference and connected with discourse. That is: matter and meaning are mutually articulated.

When the logic of matter dynamism is incorporated into the perspective of Butler (2015), we can see how, in the very development of the practice of selfie, the production of accounts of oneself is involved in a material-discursive entanglement. Simply put, the selfie can be considered as an apparatus – in Barad's (2007) terms –, a specific material-discursive configuration guided by the relationships between the account of oneself, digital materialities, subjectivities, and algorithmic actions. Other than thinking of it as a networked material-discursive entanglement – as suggested by Warfield (2016) from Barad (2007) –, it can be understood as an apparatus that involves material-discursive practices of giving an account of oneself. Based on the philosophy-physics Niels Bohr, Barad (2007) extrapolates laboratory conformation of an apparatus to think of it as specific material-discursive practice, which produce differences “that matter” in dynamic reconfigurations materials in the world. The selfie, hence, works as apparatus not only in the sense of a self-portrait produced by a device capable of transforming light into numerical information but mainly by showing itself as a discursive practice – and also material – developed through everyday experiences, textual interactions, algorithmic audiences, shares, metadata, etc.

The selfie practice, therefore, is not related to the experience of a subject or linked directly to it. The experience, understood in relational terms, through relations also experienced

(JAMES, 1912, 2000), passes through several beings – in the hybrid sense proposed by Souriau (2009) and Latour (2012). In the case of this work, it involves a multiplicity of practices and relationships – in different entanglements of matter and discourse (BARAD, 2007) –, ranging from a hug in the square to the digital materiality of the algorithms that will interpret an image of that hug. This material-discursive conformation, as seen in the analyzed examples, produces its specificity in the relation of the processes translated by the digital platform with the daily practice of those who frequent that space. These are not only possible local or cultural contexts, but it is also an experience developed in the joint production of accounts of oneself and digital materialities. The automatic reading of the images, in such a way, is related both to the interactions and portraits produced through the practice of selfie in that specific space and to a set of algorithmic parameters trained from other faces, hugs, smiles, and squares.

We can observe again, for example, one publication presented in the previous topic, in which we find two lovers holding each other in the image: he is holding his smartphone and smiling at the camera, while she sticks out her tongue, hugs him with one hand and with the other she holds an açaí bowl. Such banal experience present in smiles and hugs continues its trajectory through different relationships, not only from the shared image itself but also from the human audience that observes and acts on it – with likes, comments, and interactions that become metadata associated with the publication – and an algorithmic audience capable of interpreting that photo and, in this case, identifying two smiling people in an open place with trees. The account of oneself produced through the practice of selfie is linked to another multiple capable of aggregating material-discursive formations that limit themselves to an object or subject. The image of oneself is also addressed to an algorithmic audience capable of reading and transforming that photo into a textual set that will later be read by the system and heard by someone unable to see it with their own eyes. Accordingly, the photo also becomes a practice of data production inserted, based on algorithmic actions, in a logic of what Lemos and Bitencourt (2017) call performative sensibility. The practice of selfie, therefore, goes beyond the moment of hugging – and beyond the image itself and the smiling faces –, crossing a multiplicity of relationships in different tangles of subjectivity and materiality. Or else, to use the logic of Tarde¹² (1890), it is a continuity of the experience developed through imitations and repetitions that generate differences. The faces, affects, data and algorithms multiply, intersect, imitate and differ between the square and the social networks.

12 For Tarde, the principle of imitation (1890) is directly related to the social. Every social relationship, or every social fact, is distinguished from others by being imitative. Therefore, there is no similarity character – as in Durkheim (2014) –, but a differentiation by imitation. This way, a society is not a specific aggregate, a thing, but an imitativity, an association. According to Tarde, the continuity of the social occurs through imitation. They are repetitions, imitations that generate differences. Although Barad (2007) did not quote him, his proposal to perceive “diffraction” as a phenomenon and simultaneously an analysis tool – thus seeking patterns of difference instead of similarity – is very close to the sociological and philosophical perspective of Tarde.

Concluding remarks

Besides the tracks of material-discursive productions most visible in a selfie publication on Facebook – such as hashtags, captions, comments, emojis, geotags –, we have also identified in this work interpretations of the images generated by algorithmic procedures. The aim is not to think about the algorithm itself, but in the context of sociotechnical phenomena associated with it (DOURISH, 2016); in our case, therefore, we perceive it as an audience that takes parts in the material and discursive entanglement that makes up the practice of selfie.

As a starting point, we took selfie publications registered with the geolocation of a square and used it to show relationships of sociability and affection that materialize in distinct ways and are involved in the trajectory of instauration (SOURIAU, 2009) of the practice itself. The smiling faces, seen in the images, also become “closeup” and “smile”; the hugs multiply with the exclamations in the captions and the expressiveness of the hashtags; the joy of smiles is formed together with the texts and data associated with it, the friends’ comments, the heart emojis, the “people smiling” of automatic reading; the photographic experience in the square is also an experience shared with others – people, algorithms, data, diverse digital material.

We argued in this article that the selfie, aside from being configured as a relational practice, develops itself as an account of oneself associated with another multiple – blending with the material and discursive conformation of digital data, algorithmic procedures and subjectivity. It is not a type of image aimed at the subject who supposedly performs it, instead it is a practice of giving accounts of oneself – always directed to another (BUTLER, 2015) – that is also related to an algorithmic audience. Hence, we can understand it as an apparatus (BARAD, 2007) of material-discursive practices of giving accounts of oneself that are formed in the interaction between different digital materialities and relational experiences – in an entanglement of algorithmic audiences, bodies, affects, metadata, narratives, intimacies, and textual expressions.

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